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VOLUME XXV, No. 5

MONDAY, NOVEMBER 9, 1931

WHOLE No. 668

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MERLIN AND MACARONI¹

More years ago than I care to count, when I was a very little boy, my father used to reduce me to open-mouthed wonder by reciting to me a fable in rhyme, which began thus:

Felis sedit by a hole,
Intenta she cum tota soul
Prendere rats.

The fable ran a tragic course and closed with an impressive moral:

Quodcumque facitis, verbum sat;
Avoid a hungry big Tom cat
Studiosae.

It was my introduction to macaronics, a form of burlesque composition in which to produce a ridiculous effect Latin words are sprinkled among words of the vernacular and Latin terminations are appended to other words. The name *macaronic* was deliberately adopted by the earliest macaronic poet of Italy from the cheap and popular Italian food, *macaroni*. Macaronic poetry was cheap, common poetry for the common man. The word *macaroni*, by the way, seems to be derived from *macarone*, 'a low, coarse fellow', 'a buffoon'. At least, this is the explanation given by Gabriel Naudé, librarian to Cardinal Mazarin, who had a great penchant for reading macaronic literature. The word is probably connected with *maccare*, 'to bruise', 'to batter'. The implication, therefore, is of language intentionally corrupted. This trifling literary form has long interested me. *Nugae!*, you will exclaim. Granted. But one who does not waste at least a little of his time leads a dull and prosaic existence.

I have just called this form of writing a trifling form. But the importance of the macaronic art, at least in the minds of its practitioners, was such that there came into being an *Academia Macaronica*, as we learn from an unexpected source, the memoirs of Casanova, that hero of romantic and scandalous adventure. He writes:

'I saw a café. I entered. A moment later a big Jacobin monk whom I had known in Venice came up to me and told me that I had come just in time to join a picnic that the Macaronic Academicians were having the next day, after a session of the Academy, at which each member would recite a short poem in his own style. He invited me to take part and to honor the assemblage by giving one of my compositions. I accepted. When I had read the ten stanzas I had written for the occasion, I was elected a member by acclamation. I made a better showing at table, however, than I did at the meeting, for I ate so much macaroni that they judged me worthy to be called a prince'.

Macaronic writing is a very old literary form.

¹This paper was read at the Twenty-Fourth Annual Meeting of The Classical Association of the Atlantic States, held at Lehigh University, Bethlehem, Pennsylvania, May 1-2, 1931.

²See the article *Macaroni* in the Century Dictionary and Cyclopaedia. C. K. >.

Edmund Gosse, as well as the author of the article *Macaronics* in the great French encyclopedia, *Le Grand Larousse*, following Nodier, the French historian of macaronics, state definitely that the earliest known macaronic work was the *Carmen Macaronicum De Patavinis*, by Tisi degli Odassi (1488, or 1490). But evidently the field has not yet been investigated with sufficient care, for Epistle 8 of Ausonius, who was born in 310 A. D., is a macaronic exhibiting Greek and Latin in some of the weirdest combinations imaginable³. Nodier's date for the origin of macaronics is thus about 1150 years too late. I have also found a macaronic hymn in Old Irish and Latin dating from the seventh century, about 850 years ahead of the date given by Nodier. The latter hymn is by Colman O'Cluasaigh, of the Irish College of Cork, who died in 664. It is preserved in the Irish Book of the Hymns; it is printed by Windisch in his *Irische Texte*, 1.5. There are 56 stanzas; some contain only one or two Latin words, a few have no Latin words at all. I quote a couplet. The meter seems to be a sort of Saturnian. Assonance and rhyme are also noticeable.

Regem regum rogamus in nostris sermonibus
Anacht Noe a luchtlach diluvi temporibus.

An interesting speculation is whether the macaronic form of this hymn may not well be due to its author's religious inspiration to poesy outstripping his knowledge of a language which must have been somewhat of a stumbling block to these wild converts from paganism, and yet bore the tremendous sanction of the Roman Church, so that he felt that he must at least introduce into his hymn so much of the new and sacred language as he could manage.

The first writer of macaronics to achieve fame by such verse was Teofilo Folengo (1491-1544). His *Opus Macaronicorum* (1517) gained an immediate and remarkable vogue, and received the dubious compliment of wide imitation. Guarino Capella, Bernardino Stefonio, Andrea Baiani, Cesare Vosinio, and a host of lesser lights followed—even if afar off—in Folengo's literary wake. The peculiar form of writing quickly passed the Alps. In France the chief writer of macaronics was Antoine de la Sable (or du Sablon), who wrote, after the fashion of the age, under the name Antonius de Arena. Most authorities are in agreement about this name; but Honoré Bouche, a Provençal historian and a contemporary of Arena, declares that the name actually was *de Arena* and that the man's father was a Neapolitan. Arena published at Avignon in 1573 a burlesque account in macaronic verse of a campaign by Charles V in Provence, in 1536. Another poem by Arena is in praise of the dance; in this, imitating the anonymous Latin poem on bird-notes, he coins verbs to express playing on various musical instru-

³See THE CLASSICAL WEEKLY 24.184.

ments; *locat, sibat, carlamuat, sifrat, tamborinat, harpat, rebecat, flouiat, loudat, organat*, and, for the greatest instrument of them all, *cantat de gorgia*. Folengo in Italy and Arena in France are regarded as the macaronic classics. Macaronic composition became as popular in France as in Italy. Even the great Molière condescended to employ macaronic writing in the ceremonial scene with the doctors in *Le Malade Imaginaire*.

Works in macaronic prose are rare. Chief among them is the *Epistulae Obscurorum Virorum*, attributed to Ulric von Hutten. Then there is a curious little book whose title page I quote: "*Nugae Venales Sive Thesaurus Ridendi et Jocandi ad Gravissimos Severissimosque Viros, Patres Melancholicorum Conscriptos. Anno 1730. Prostant apud Neminem; sed tamen Ubique*". Some of its jesting articles are prose macaronics in Plat-Deutsch and Latin. A remarkable feature of it is a series of three poems (not in macaronics) reminiscent of the Testamentum Porcelli and totaling 290 hexameters, every word of which begins with the letter *P*—a veritable tour de force⁴. The chief true macaronic of Germany dates from 1593 and is by an author who conceals his identity under the pseudonym Griphaldus Knickkanackius. Who of us would have believed off-hand that the word *knick-knack* was not of indigenous origin? On the general subject of German macaronics the French critic G. Brunet, with the cat-and-dog attitude of Gaul to German, remarks, "These Germanic pleasantries are a bit heavy, too long, and utterly incomprehensible to one who is not skilled in German". There are also early Polish-Latin macaronics.

The employment of true macaronics in extended composition is rare in English. The only prominent example there is the Polemo-Middinia of Drummond of Hawthornden. This describes a quarrel between villages on the Firth of Forth. The author shows great ingenuity in grafting Latin terminations upon his Lowland Scotch vernacular. Here is a brief specimen:

Lifeguardamque sibi saevas locat improba lassas,
Maggaeam, magis doctam milkare coweas,
Et doctam sweepare flooras et sternere beddas,
Quaeque novit spinnare et longas ducere threedas.

There is also a political tract by one Geddes, who signs himself Jodocus Cocaius Merlini Cocaii Pronepos, which appeared in 1795 in the form of an ironic ode entitled *Pindarico-Sapphico-Macaronica in Gulielmi Pitti Laudem*. A macaronic by Joshua Barnes exists, containing even Anglo-Hellenisms, such as *κλόβοισιν* *ἰβόγχοις*, 'they were banged with clubs'.

For full discussion of macaronic literature, those who are sufficiently interested (or curious) may consult Charles Nodier, *Du Langage Factice Appelé Macaronique* (Paris, 1834), Genthe, *Geschichte der Macaronischen Poesie* (Leipzig and Halle, 1836), and especially the learned and sympathetic work by O. Delepierre, *Macaronéana* (Paris, 1852), with additional new material in a memoir printed for private circulation in the Transactions of the Philobiblon Society (London, 1855).

But it is of the work of Folengo that I shall speak

⁴Compare remarks on such poems, by Mr. W. B. Sedgwick, in *THE CLASSICAL WEEKLY* 24.155, column 1. C. K.

to-day. Teofilo Folengo was born in a suburb of Mantua, in 1491. He was a Benedictine monk who fled his monastery and lived a dissolute life, supporting himself by his poems, which he himself described⁵ as an attempt to produce a literature 'something like macaroni, a gross, rude, and rustic, mixture of flour, cheese, and butter'. Folengo, living when he did, of course wrote under a pseudonym. The fact that he had taken orders led him to adopt the name Merlinus; the 'merlin' was a fur-bordered cloak or cowl covering the head and the shoulders of ecclesiastics. DuCange thus defines it: "*Merlinus, amiculum seu amictus quo canonici caput tegebant*". It is first mentioned, I think, in an ancient ecclesiastical statute of 1259: "*Clerici beneficiati cappas portent de pellibus esquiroloorum aut agnorum nigrorum, vel portent merlinum cum ipsa cappa*". The cognomen of Merlin's pseudonym, Cocaius, means 'cook', in allusion both to the preparation of the mess of macaroni and to the fact that debased Latin of all kinds was then known in Italy as *Latino di cucina* and in France as *Latin de cuisine*, 'Kitchen Latin'. Another explanation, however, of each name has been offered. Brunet writes: "The name Merlin was borrowed from the celebrated seer, Merlin, who plays so prominent a rôle in the romances of chivalry". But even the name of the Merlin of the Arthurian romance, who met his match in Vivien, falls under the previous explanation. As to the name Cocaius, the claim is made, on what seems very slender authority, that Folengo assumed it in honor of one of his boyhood teachers, Visago Cocaio.

The chief poem of Folengo's collection is a burlesque epic, an extravagant medley of chivalrous deeds, ridiculous and squalid adventures, and satirical allegory. It was enormously popular in its day, and for two centuries thereafter. Its influence upon Rabelais, Folengo's contemporary, was so profound that no examination of Pantagruel can be complete without reference to it. Folengo's poem was 'translated' into French by Robert Angot, *Sieur de l'Éperonnière* (Paris, 1606; reprinted 1859). The title of this so-called translation is *Histoire Macaronique de Merlin Cocaie*. This rare and interesting work in quaint old French is a piece of witty and spirited writing, but it is a mere paraphrase of Folengo's book. It furnishes no help at all toward understanding the extremely difficult language of the original. It covers only the mock epic, omitting the other poems; in fact, it does not even mention them.

Merlin's volume opens with a pot-pourri (you may take the term *pot-pourri* as literally as you please) of so-called sonnets and eclogues treating of pastoral love. The epic itself, the *pièce de résistance* of the work, is divided into 25 Macaronea, as the author calls them. To these are appended three books of a poem called Moschaea, describing a terrible battle between the flies and the ants; this poem was, of course, suggested by the *Batrachomyomachia*. It was written, so Merlin tells us, "puerili tempore". Then there are a few *Epistulae*, and, lastly, a number of epigrams on various topics. Merlin was a prolific writer. In addition to his maca-

⁵The translations of Folengo are, throughout, my own.

ronic poems under discussion he wrote, despite his licentious life, *De Humanitate Christi*, 'in the Etruscan idiom'; 'Chaos, or The Dialogue of the Three Ages'; 'On the Passion of Our Lord', in Latin hexameters; 'a charming little macaronic pamphlet' (I quote his biographer, Tomasino) entitled 'The Tabby-Cat Book'; a tract on 'Time'; a lyric in Italian describing the morals of monks; and a metaphysical dissertation aimed at Plato.

The heroes of the epic are Baldus, Cingar, and the giant Fracasso, three truly curious types. Baldus is the son of Guy (Guido), a descendant of the famous Renaud (Rinaldo) de Montauban, and of Baldine (Baldovina), daughter of Charlemagne, whom Guy carried away to the city of Cipada and who died there bringing forth her son. The poet has named this imaginary city of Cipada from a small village in the environs of Mantua, which was his own birthplace. Baldus is the original of Rabelais's hero; a present-day counterpart of him is the famous Paul Bunyan of our northwestern lumber camps. Destined to be a giant, he eats with the voracity of an ostrich and drinks a bath dry. He associates himself with Fracasso, who 'ate a calf for breakfast, and whose stomach twenty-four loaves of bread would scarcely fill'. The third member of the precious trio is Cingar, Cingar the crook, the cheat, the jolly bandit ever ready to deceive, the prototype of Panurge. We see him eager to walk, to talk, to misguide travelers, always carrying a bag full of skeleton keys and noiseless files, wherewith he enters merchants' stores by night, robs homes, forces the charity-boxes in churches, and always cunningly escapes the authorities, like any present-day bandit. These three epic forerunners of the Three Musketeers terrify the little city of Cipada and then enlarge their sphere of activities to Mantua itself. There Baldus is imprisoned, but Cingar, disguised as a Gray Friar, comes to his rescue, and aids him to escape. Baldus then becomes a sort of knight-errant by land and by sea. He fights pirates, destroys sorcerers, and discovers the sources of the Nile. That long-mysterious geographical problem was apparently even then much in the public mind. Thence Cingar penetrates to the Infernal Regions—the poet seems unable to cut loose entirely from Vergil and Dante—, where he has some queer adventures and gives us bits of biting satire. Then, after leading his heroes into the regions subterranean, Folengo brings them to the haunts of charlatans, of sorcerers, of magicians, and (save the mark) of poets, and, finding that they are perfectly at home in their surroundings, he leaves them there and ends his burlesque epic.

What does it all mean? J. J. Arnoux, in his interpretation of the poem (*Revue du Progrès*, September 15 and October 1, 1839), makes Baldus the type of armed injustice and of unjust privilege. The tyranny of Cingar, on the other hand, is, he thinks, that of trickery and of authority founded on superstition. This appears to me unlikely. Had Folengo ardently desired to reform the society of his day, he would have begun with himself. But he was a dissolute libertine. He enjoyed his vices. He found them amusing. Therefore

he painted vices to be laughed at, not to be reformed. Any interpretation which argues a serious purpose in Folengo is like trying to discover in Plautus something deeper than farce and slapstick comedy.

Not the least interesting portion of the volume is still to be mentioned. The edition which I possess is the Amsterdam edition of 1692, containing a life of Folengo, by Filippo Tomasino, who gives us a most enthusiastic panegyric of Folengo. According to Tomasino, saintliness radiated from this monkish libertine, and wisdom dripped from his pen. But, what is especially delightful, the book contains also a preface by one Acquario Lodola, who was, apparently, a lawyer of Mantua. This preface, written in macaronic prose, is a terrific attack upon a certain Scardaffio Zaratano, who seems to have been a Mantuan physician and surgeon with literary pretensions. It appears also that he purloined an early copy of the poem from Lodola himself, corrupted it by unworthy interpolations, and claimed it as his own: copyright laws were then undreamed of.

Lodola's diatribe is of value as revealing to us the nature and the amenities of the literary criticism of the day, as well as the quality of literary judgment and appreciation. Compared to this *odium scriptorium* the famed *odium theologicum* was colorless and cool. Lodola prefixes to his attack a hexastich, as he calls it, composed by a certain Ioannes Baricocola (I strongly suspect this to be an assumed name, as this person's identity is entirely unknown both to Nodier and to Brunet). It represents the book as speaking in its own behalf:

'Lately I was entangled in all the webs of Scardaffio, a man dirty-mouthed with abominable filth. Nevertheless the minute care of Acquario Lodola washed me, and I have been cleansed by his soap. Therefore, ye wise ones, open your purses. If any one through stinginess does not buy me, he is out of luck.'

Lodola's foreword is entitled *Epistolium Colericum Magistri Acquarii ad Scardaffum Zaratatum Merlini Poematis Corruptorem*. *Colericum* it is with a vengeance; it is a perfect gem of abuse and invective, as you will readily realize from a few excerpts. Unfortunately, much of it is unquotable. It begins thus: 'There was a custom among the ancients that in the opening words of their letters they should include some greeting especially appropriate to the recipient. What greeting, then, shall we bestow on you, O spineless Scardaffio? The grace of God be with you? By no means. Bodily health be yours? Far from it. But I have found this couplet applicable to you:

Dens tibi si caderet quoties fers ore bosiam,
Iam tua non posset pane ganassa frui.

"If one of your teeth were to drop out every time that you make a filthy remark, by this time your toothless jaws would be unable to enjoy bread". Or should I desire for you riches and coin? No: for we often see you riding on your little she-mule <muletta>, adorned with brocaded tunic and wearing a necklace; nor are decorations wanting either to you or to the little mule, nor stirrups, nor bridles decked with a thousand tassels. Oh, if you could only see yourself as with self-important stride you strut through the city with your heels sounding tic-tac. Or should we wish you sons? Not so; for you are unworthy of them. Nor is this dedication fitting: "To a man learned, rich, and bald".

Finally, my brother Scardaffo, I wish upon you four galley-cargoes of cancers, and as serious bodily ailments as we ever hear mentioned in a group of peasants'.

Then Acquario breaks into verse, quoting a passage from Folengo himself (from the Fifteenth Macaronic), a dozen hexameters setting forth the various loathsome diseases which he prays shall come upon the hapless object of his *odium scriptorium*. He shows skill, even genius, in their selection: headache, dropsy, starvation, boils, wasting plague, heart pains, intercostal neuralgia, quartan fever, constant expectoration, internal tumor, taenia, stomach-ache, vesical calculi, cancer, jaundice, bunions <literally 'bee-hives', in allusion both to the shape and the sting of the swellings>, dysentery, mange, smallpox, violent insanity, hydrophobia <literally 'dog-madness', *stizza canina*>, toothache, scrofula, glandular swellings, hernia, sore cheeks, leprosy, anemia, dysphagia, asthma, Saint Anthony's disease <erysipelas>, gout, phthisis, chillblains, corns enough to cripple their possessor: these, and a few more, are packed into twelve hexameters, which all scan! Then Lodola piously adds:

'That you may be still happier, we wish these diseases to be incurable. Would you like to know what favor of yours to me has moved me to wish you thus well? Prick up your ears, Towser! Because you stole from me the divine poem of Merlinus Cocaius. And soon you brought it piecemeal to light defiled with your corrupt thoughts...'

The reference here is, of course, to Scardaffo's interpolations. Presently Lodola adds:

'I knew that you were daily acting-in-your-own-characteristic-style <all this is said in one word, coined on a Greek model, *saralanizare*>, selling quack nostrums, poultices and ill-made plasters, telling your poor dupes that these were the best plasters to cure the itch'.

There is more, much more, in the same strain. The reviewers killed Keats with words that, compared to these, were complimentary.

But let us turn to Merlin himself as he tells us his theory and his practice of the macaronic art. In the first place, the macaronic poet, he says, *must* be obscene. 'For the more gross the verses are', says he, 'so much the more macaronic elegance do they acquire'. He adds:

'How then is a *macaron* <his own word> devised and constructed? For instance, we employ a coarse metaphor to indicate great fear. It might, I confess, be expressed more clearly by "he's terribly scared". Why, say I, is a macaronic form sought? For the sake always of laughter, never of clarity or rhetorical elegance. I know what I am saying when I say "beans"'.

Merlin means that he calls a spade a spade. There is much more instruction, carefully elaborated, for those who yearn to follow in his macaronic pathway. He adds then devoutly: 'But if it become necessary to mention God or the Saints, it is in poor taste and blameworthy not to employ passably good Latin'.

Merlin gives us also a set of curiously complicated rules for vowel quantity in macaronic verse, rules which he himself observes most strictly. At the close of his little treatise on his trade he naively observes: 'The rest of the things that do not suit you very well you must bear resignedly'.

The language and the style of the poems render them exceedingly difficult to read, for they date from an era of many diverse local dialects in Italy, all of which are freely employed. Merlin even tells us that one portion is in the dialect of Brescia, another in Mantuan, others in the dialects of many towns and districts of Italy. The resultant *mélange* therefore exhibits a problem of surprise in every line. We shall let Merlin speak:

'But some will say, "You use words, Merlin, which only some restricted localities are wont to employ, words which can be understood only in Mantua or in Brescia". I reply that, just as we do not all alike understand Greek, or Hebrew, or Arabic, or Chaldean, or even Latin at the same time, so it is not to be wondered at that all do not alike understand Florentine, or slang <*squizzurum*>, or shoemakers' dialect <*scarpacinum*>, or chimney-sweep argot <*spazzacaminum*>'.

We notice here special dialects for the various trades! It is an illuminating comment on the heterogeneity of the Italy of that day.

Here are a few examples of the strange words or usages we find. *Fadigam* is not readily recognized as *facultatem*, nor *aiutrum* as *adjutorem*, nor *laiare* and *spoiat* as *tagliare* and *spogliat* until one becomes familiar with the fact that Folengo regularly omits medial *gl* from Italian words; *rechissit* is for *requiescit*; *mezzana*, 'a tile', is used to mean hard-tack or its sixteenth-century equivalent; *voiam* is a stranger until it is identified as the genitive plural *vestrum*; *drittus* is a condensed *directus*; *desgratia* = *Dei gratia*, is comparatively easy; *godit* represents *gaudet*; *molesina* is for *moglietina*; *vitula* capers through the meadows as *vedella*; *fomnae* is condensed from *feminae*; *marezant* does duty for *ruminant*, *zampiger* for *impiger*. There are a thousand others of like weirdness. The diction is indeed the chief problem of the poems.

Let us now look at some of the poems themselves. Obviously any attempt at a general view of the long Rabelaisian epic is impracticable. Time would be wanting, and there are other reasons, especially the high flavor of the poem. Its very opening lines are a warning to keep off the grass:

'There has come to me a fantastic fancy, to sing with coarse muse the story of Baldus, at whose high-sounding fame and repute as a gallant and bravo Earth trembles and Hell goes into spasms of fear'.

But the opening poem of the collection, a macaronic medley of verses on bucolic love, is worth a passing glance. Indeed, Urbain Coustelier (1754) calls this poem "un véritable chef-d'oeuvre de naïveté et de grace". It is certainly naïve enough, in spots.

Merlin's prefatory lines to the poem are:

'Whoever takes this little book to read, let him lay it down if he has the nose of a rhinoceros <i. e. if he has a delicate and fastidious sense of smell>. I do not lay myself out <*non me edo*> for the delicate-nosed <*nasuti*> nor for those who get sick at seeing a coarse book. Let him who reads everything <i. e. who can stand anything>, who knows that any reading brings something good, read me carefully. I have written this playful book <*lusimus ista*> about the imagined love of Tonellus. I call my little book Zanitonella'.

The title is a 'tabloid' for 'The Love of Tonellus for Zanina'. Tonellus is, of course, a diminutive, 'Young Tony'; indeed the nickname *Toni* is not infrequently

used in the poem. The poem, or rather collection of poems, bears this caption or subtitle: 'Consisting of various *sonolegiae* and eclogues, concerning the shepherd Tonellus, who ardently loves the shepherdess Zanina'. In a marginal gloss (for these occasional glosses Heaven and Merlin be thanked!) the poet defines *sonolegia*: 'It is a sonnet, in elegiac verse, and is composed of fourteen lines just like common sonnets'. Meter and rhyme apparently do not enter as factors in the naming.

The first sonnet is addressed by Merlin to his readers:

'City folk will likely laugh at me, a country bumpkin, because I burn with love for my Zanina, or because I am accustomed to clean out cow-stables, or because I have an eager urge to write what love is, just as if I were not scratched by the nail of a lass who everywhere draws heartbreak in her train. Believe me, no one on earth, be he peasant or city coxcomb, eats bread <i. e. lives> whom Venus's little rascal does not deceive, the little fellow who flies like a bird, blind and trouserless. But, though the pen I wield become a mattock, and though I make my hands hard <*drusias*, for *duras*> by digging, yet, God bless me <*ayme Deus*>, I have not been able to escape the madness that taught me what love is'.

Then follows a series of sonnets to Zanina, some of them very neat and pretty, some absurd, and all requiring a bit of expurgation. This is the first:

'It was the time when the early spring gazes in wonder <*spantegat*> at the lovely flowers, and Apollo melts the cold frost, and Saint Agnes makes the lizards dart out into the sunlight, and Biolcus leads the stabled herds to pastures fresh, and the throat of the bush-dwelling nightingale trills merrily <*frifolat*> in the gloaming, and Venus heats up the heart hour by hour. Then she, by the favor of God, brought you, darling Zanina, before my eyes while I was feeding my goats. Scarcely had I seen your gathered flowers, scarcely had I seen your face, when Love shot his bolt. Believe me, Love shot at me such an arrow that <*quod*> I burned for you like black beeswax'.

Of this sonnet Brunet writes:

'Among many gross vulgarities and expressions in execrable taste Folengo can often place genuine grace and pure sentiment. There are delicacy and charm in this sonnet, in which Tonellus tells how he fell in love'.

Here is another sonnet to Zanina, with some pleasing conceits:

'Does not the starry Diana reveal herself brilliantly to me when lovely Zanina turns her beauteous eyes upon me? Does not the sunny morn appear cloudy when lovely Zanina unbinds her tresses? Do not the country folk scatter their treasures when lovely Zanina smilingly shows <*grignat*> her teeth? Does not the white moon shed abroad her glory when my lady's charming little mouth sings? Do not my she-goats leap more lightly when my lady's graceful limbs lightly dance? The head, hands, feet, of Zanina are sun, moon, and she-goats to me'.

What of this one?

'If Zanina's mouth smiles, Apollo smiles: Zanina's lips are my undoing. If Zanina's mouth speaks, Apollo speaks: Zanina's lips are an evil Easter for me <i. e. place a curse upon me; the expression is a common Italian malediction>. If Zanina's mouth sings, Apollo sings: Zanina's lips are melody to me. If Zanina's mouth spits, it spits balm: Zanina's lips are red wine <*aquarosa*> to me. If Zanina's mouth laments, funerals wail: the stones of my Zanina <i. e. the stones she walks on> are worshipful. Therefore when my

girl-friend laughs, weeps, speaks, sings, Apollo at the same time laughs, weeps, speaks, sings. If I speak, weep, sing, laugh, spit, I do so because lovely Zanina does it'.

'Young Tony' cherishes a bitter grudge against Cupid:

'I stood in the shadow, all alone, a swain in the shadow. I was feeding my goats through green fields. No thoughts were crossing my mind; I was just trying to have a good time. Then you, O sorrow-bearing boy, pierced my heart, nor did your dart miss me for an instant. You broke up the very fastenings of my reason, which once was a strong fortress round about my courage <*corada*: for *coraggio*>. Did you not catch me disarmed, you little jackass? Was there not any guard at my citadel? Like a bandit you cruelly broke up the stage setting for me <i. e. upset me entirely>. O you traitor! What fine tricks you play. Believe me, a soldier who despoils a poor man, a weak man, wins very little honor from me'.

The first eclogue keeps to the traditional pastoral type, but it is written in Sapphics. It opens as follows (I quote the first stanza in the original patois):

Dum stravaccatae pegerae marezant,
Dumque passutas coprit umbra vaccas,
Ecce sub gianda locus umbriosus,
Barba Philippe.

Tony is speaking:

'While the loitering herds chew their cud, and while the shadows cover the sated cows, lo! a shady place beneath an oak, Uncle Philip'.

The eclogue proceeds as follows:

Philipp.—'That's so, old Crab <a term of intimate and affectionate friendliness>: let's both rest. What a good breeze is blowing under these leaves while the sun boils <*sboientat*: for *sboigientat*> the country-side with awful heat'.

Tony.—'Do you hear how the cicadas jar? <literally, how the cicadas 'cicade': *cigalae cicigant*. Incidentally, the highly expressive term *jar* for the musical wing-rasp of the cicadas comes from our southern Appalachians, where the mountaineers call them *jar-flies*>. They fairly split your head with their jarring. They excite the desire of men for drinking all the time. So hand me over that flask, already broached, that you have under your cloak. I'm thirsty, Phil. My jaws are parched. I don't want any weak wine, either <*lorellum*, from *loro*, wine of the second pressing>.... Take away that empty potsherd <evidently a cup too small for his thirst>. Now I'll drink: glug, glug <in the original, *clo, clo*> goes the bottle. Ha! That's good wine. But it has the taste of a smelly bottle'.

The last two lines of this stanza read:

Est bonum vinum; sed habet saporem
Oybo vaselli.

That strange word *oybo* is an indeclinable adjective in the genitive. A lucky marginal gloss explains it thus: "Oybo spuzzantis est; aliquando est nomen indeclinabile, ut nasum defendit". It is the full flower of Italian argot. But let us return to the eclogue. (Tony is still speaking):

'There! I'm refreshed. I've drowned my grouch. My courage, dry because it was too hot, has sucked up the wine like a brick burnt in the fire. What a fine breeze! My voice comes strong. Here, Phil, take the bag-pipes, while I sing with full-throated breath, "Li-li-blirum!"'

Phillip.—'Stop that infernal noise!'

Tony.—'Let me wipe my nose first. Now begin. Must I sing something impressive or something funny? I've a cold; I'll sing something funny:

"O my... *liblirum*... Zanina... *blirum*. Come hither... *lirum*... my... *li-li-lirum*"

This nonsense evidently represents sneezing and is intended as comedy, like Beckmesser's cacophony in the *Meistersinger*. But what of the peculiar syllables *li-li-blirum*? Can it be—I hazard a guess here—that this *li-li-blirum* suggested the refrain of the *Lilibulero*, that famous ribald song of the English Restoration?

Decidedly the most readable of the poems are the epigrams. They are less objectionable in contents, and their language, though it is still macaronic, is somewhat less difficult. Here is one about a mastiff dog. It is, as our English cousins would say, 'not too bad'.

'My mastiff is a dog. Cipada calls him Morocco. He is ever the sure guardian of my hay-mow. He turns aside sharp weapons with his eager jaws. By his formidable appearance he terrifies even wild boars. With his claws he tears to pieces ravening wolves. Yet scarcely does he hear me say *to, to*, when I call him, when quickly he bounds up on all four feet'.

Merlin's allusion to the terrible execution wrought by the mastiff's claws shows how little he knew about mastiffs in particular or of canine methods of attack in general. The word rendered 'ravening' above is *monobudellos*, 'having but one intestine', therefore having speedier digestive processes, therefore ever hungry, 'ravening'.

Our common salutation 'Hello' had its counterpart in *Ola*; the reply to it was *Cheld*. Even this trifling custom moves Merlin to verse:

'Why, if we hail any one, do we say *Ola*? And why does he who is hailed call out *Cheld*? If any one of you chances to know this thing, I'll tell it—provided he first tells me'.

The epigram expresses 'chances' by *habet casonem*. The idiom is a strange one at best, but how did Merlin ever think of transplanting *cason* into the third declension?

There is a pleasing epigram to Spring:

'Earth dons her many-colored gown, and the lovely meadow puts forth new flowers. The hillsides smile. The thickets grow green. Every bird <*usella*: for *accello*> seeks its mate. The cold lizard darts along sunny walls and the bee gathers juices from the depths of the flowers <note that the word rendered here by 'depths' is *culmine*; the 'culmination' of a blossom is, of course, the narrowest part, the bottom, of the bloom>. The ant crawls up <*extra*> the grain-bearing straws and the noisy frog croaks among the ditches. The little lady shepherdess <*pastorella damatina*> sings her wayward song and clusters together white lilies and crimson roses'.

But a delightful spring may develop into a burning summer:

'The blazing sun from Heaven parches <*schiappat*, 'splits'; the idea is taken from the well-known effect of hot sun on mud> the earth and scorches the green fields with his hot torch. We guide exhausted horses, riding at ease <*abelasium*, a Latinized *a bell' agio*>, the reins gathered in our weary hands. The cicadas crack our brains with their jarring, and the bull-flies torment the mastiffs'.

Cingar must have his joke at all times and at all hazards. The fortune of the sea once shattered a galley laden with a cargo of salt meat. The keelson cracked and the strong hull took water. Everyone was weeping and praying to Heaven for aid. Cingar

merely started to nibble some hard-tack, just as if he were not soon to be swallowed up in the waves. 'Why are you eating, Cingar, and not praying?', asked someone. 'Because', Cingar answered, 'I'm soon going to drink a great deal I'm eating now'.

The final epigram of the series is also addressed to the redoubtable Cingar, and is in praise of Lake Garda:

'Do you wish to know the reason why Nature, in doing everything, has had good success <*bene disposuit*>? Listen to what I shall tell you. There is an Italian lake that Brescia calls Benaco. It is more useful and productive than other lakes <*lacis*, for *lacubus*>. Most excellent fish are eaten from it: sardines, eels, carp, tench, trout. But what is a fish good for away from its protecting water? <for protecting Merlin uses *palladio*>. Therefore the shores round about Benaco are profusely planted with olives, and in the midst of the water lies <*possat*, for *posita est*> the island of Sirmio. Here oil is made <*nascitur*>, here are found fish and fishermen. And rich Brescia has the iron frying-pans'.

Only frying-pans, fish, and the oil in which to fry them! Could Merlin have been blind to Garda's beauty? Or is he only fooling?

Of the Rabelaisian poem, the burlesque epic, some of the many high spots may be mentioned with no attempt at translation. In the *Macaronea Prima*, as Merlin calls it, such a high spot is the account of the love and the marriage of Guido the Hermit and Baldovina; another is an elaborate description of one of the Gargantuan banquets previously alluded to. The second Macaronic contains an amusing account of the boyhood of Baldus, a description of Cingar's personality, and a comment on city manners and morals. In the fourth there is a sarcastic attack on old men who fall in love with young girls. A joke played by Cingar on Tognazzo, and Cingar's duplicity in the sale of a load of the common or garden variety of fertilizer enliven the fifth. In the seventh Merlin comments on the vast number of monks and monastic orders.

'When they've gambled away their money and have emptied their pockets, after the basket lacks bread and the flagon lacks wine, back they scurry to the brothers again, and a frock is given to them at once'.

The original of this runs as follows:

Postquam giocarunt nummos tascasque vodarunt,
Postquam pane caret cophinum, caelario vino,
In fratres properant, datur his extemplo capuzzus.

The ninth contains some startlingly plain talk on monkish manners and morals. The poet fears to depict the swinish manners of the monks, lest he give offense to really good and religious people; nevertheless he proceeds with unrestrained frankness to show up the monks as shameless, lewd, lascivious, lazy, stupid, their thoughts ever reaching out toward indulgence of all kinds, banditry, and thuggery.

Another passage, extremely sacrilegious, is a mock exegesis of Matthew 4.4: Non in solo pane vivit homo, sed in omni verbo quod procedit ex ore Dei. The mock interpretation is as follows:

Non homo, Cingar ait, solo de pane cibatur,
Sed bovis et pingui vervecis carne. Probat
Istud Evangelio, quod nos vult pascere ver bo:
Divide ver a bo, poteris cognoscere sensum.

By dividing *verbo* into *ver-bo*, the commentator explains, you have the suggestion of *ver-vex*, 'mutton', and *bos*, 'beef'. The ninth macaronic also details Cingar's stratagems in liberating Baldus from prison. There is a passage *contra mulieres* in the fourteenth, one line of which reads (of course I do not quote it with approval), 'The foolish things haven't even a brain'. The twenty-fifth concludes with a panegyric on Vergil, rating him superior to many great figures of history and literature, earlier and later, embracing in dizzy disregard of chronological sequence John the Baptist, Homer, Dante, Petrarch, and Christ himself. In his final paragraph Merlin boasts: 'I have filled the whole world with Macaronics'.

Merlin's fame was secure and very real, even during his lifetime; it endured for full two hundred years after his death. He realized this fame while he lived, and he rated himself as fully worthy of it. Witness an epigram he addressed to himself (it is quoted by Brunet):

Magna suo veniat Merlino parva Cipada,
Atque Cocaorum crescat casa bassa meorum.
Mantua Virgilio gaudet, Verona Catullo:
Dante suo Florens Urbs Tusca, Cipada Cocaio.
Dicor ego superans alios levitate poetas,
Ut Maro medesimos superat gravitate poetas.

'Let little Cipada become great <note the curious use of *veniat* for *fiat*> through her own Merlin, and let the humble house of my Cocai wax in fame. Mantua rejoices in Vergil, Verona in Catullus; The Flowery Tuscan City <i. e. Florence> delights in her Dante, Cipada in Cocaio. I shall be extolled as surpassing other poets in levity, just as Maro surpasses these same poets in serious work'.

Merlin proved a true prophet of his fame; as remarked above, Polengo is even to-day regarded as the macaronic classic.

Merlin's friends and followers worshiped him and his art. His literary renown is further attested by the fact that in a comedy, *I Poeti Rivali*, by G. Ricci, presented for the first time in 1632, Merlin appears as one of the characters; while he is not satirized, he is represented as making use of his own peculiar macaronic diction.

One last estimate of comparative literary values is revelatory of the literary taste of the times. We have seen how the poet himself recognizes Vergil's pre-eminence. Merlin's enthusiastic champion, Acquario Lodola, waxes eloquent over a passage in which his hero describes a storm at sea. The critic's prepossessions run away with his judgment as follows:

'If you are seeking a description of a tempest at sea, why must you go about it by bursting your blood-vessels over that passage in the First Aeneid of Vergil, where he says:

Una Eurusque Notusque ruunt creberque procellis
Africus et vastos volvunt ad litora fluctus...
et caetera?

Behold, Merlin says: "And now the shouting of men smites the abyss of Heaven. There is heard a creaking of cordage. The sea itself holds horror-stricken faces and the hues of death. Now Sirocco prevails; now Boreas reigns supreme. The sea grows rougher and splashes the stars with his waves. Often is Olympus lit with flaming flashes. The torn sails gleam palely, slit into ribbons, and all things threaten a dreadful death to sailors. Now the bounding ship touches the lofty

sky: now in the yawning trough it pounds upon the infernal swamp'.

This is pure plagiarism. But Lodola is in deadly earnest. I wonder if he had ever read the first book of the Aeneid. But we are fortunate in having this comparison made with a passage so perfectly familiar to all of you that you must know it practically verbatim. It may be of interest to quote the passage from Merlin and allow you to make your own comparisons:

Iam gridor aetherias hominum concussit abyssos,
Sentiturque ingens cordarum stridor, et ipse
Pontus habet pavidos vultus, mortisque colores.
Nunc Sirocus habet palmam, nunc Borra superchiat;
Irrugit pelagus, tangit quoque fluctibus astra;
Fulgure flammigero creber lampezat Olympus.
Vela forata micant crebris lacerata balottis;
Horrendam mortem nautis ea cuncta minazzant.
Nunc sbalzata ratis celsum tangebant Olympum;
Nunc subit infernam unda sbadachiante paludem.

Altogether, the problems of macaronic literature afford an interesting, if trivial, field for investigation. In the late fifteenth and early sixteenth centuries a wave of macaronic writing swept Europe. But it was foredoomed to evanescence. Most of the macaronic works that once contributed to the merriment of a continent have all but perished. One of the most famous of its day exists in but a single exemplar in the British Museum. Others are buried in private collections and are now inaccessible except to the favored few. But the problem will give amusement to your idle hours—if you have any.

PHILADELPHIA,
PENNSYLVANIA

B. W. MITCHELL

REVIEW

Modern Methods in Classical Mythology. By H. J. Rose. W. C. Henderson and Son, University Press, St. Andrews, Scotland (1930). Pp. 50.

Professor H. J. Rose, well and favorably known to scholars through his edition of Plutarch's Roman Questions¹, and to a wider circle through his two volumes on Primitive Culture in Greece and Primitive Culture in Italy², as well as through his Handbook of Greek Mythology³, has in the pamphlet here under review published three lectures delivered by him at the University College in London, in February, 1930. These lectures are entitled I. Mythology and Religion (5-19), II. Mythology, History and Folklore (20-35), III. Hyginus the Mythographer (36-50).

The first lecture, after a rapid survey of mythological theories from Varro through the nineteenth century, deals chiefly with the aetiological explanation of myths, which, Professor Rose rightly believes, has been much exaggerated in use. In connection with this he turns against the oft repeated statement that ancient religion had no creed. For, as he remarks (8-9), no ritual

¹The Roman Questions of Plutarch (Oxford: At the Clarendon Press, 1924).

²Primitive Culture in Greece (London, Methuen, New York, George H. Doran Company [the Preface is dated in July, 1928: the title-page bears no date]); Primitive Culture in Italy (London, Methuen, New York, George H. Doran Company [the Preface is dated in July, 1926: the title-page bears no date]).

³H. J. Rose, Handbook of Greek Mythology (New York, E. P. Dutton and Co. The Preface is dated in June, 1928: the title-page bears no date).

would ever have been performed had not some kind of belief been present. He also denies our right to make a sharp distinction between myth and dramatic ritual (*dromena*). Of the relation between myth and religion in the wider sense he remarks that clearly myths influenced beliefs, that they reflect the spiritual attitude of the society in which they originated, and that the Greek gods became more moral in conformity with the rise of moral ideas in the developing society. In the light of this thesis (17) a reasonable god is one who gives his gifts to men when men are not impious; he is thereby a moral and righteous god whether or not he indulges in irregularities like those ascribed to Zeus. It follows that there are no 'immoral' myths at all. During the fifth century, indeed, the question of justice came much to the fore and the view prevailed that the moral law applies equally to men and gods. The conclusion is reached (19) that myths had to do with the form of the ancient religious practices, of which they were, to some extent, the offspring, but also, to some extent, the parents, and that later they were examined by the Greeks themselves from an angle wholly strange to their originators.

Lecture II starts with Euhemerus and his influence on the scholars of the eighteenth century. We, however, our author says, have gone to the other extreme. All the different phenomena discovered by anthropology among primitive tribes, and even the tenets of psychoanalysis, have been, in their turn, discovered in Greek religion, and particularly in the cult of gods and other beings connected with the nether world. This applies especially to the hero-cults. In discussing these tendencies Dr. Rose displays, as one would expect of him, sober and sane judgment. He sets up the following criteria to guide the investigator: (a) Ancient tradition is worthy of some attention (22); (b) All known cult-facts must be carefully analyzed (23); (c) The legend must be examined (1) as to traces of the 'Märchen' type, (2) as to its possible aetiological character. Following these principles he examines the Oedipus story, not without a sly dig at the misuse of this name by psychoanalysts. He reaches the conclusion, in which he takes issue with Carl Robert⁴, that we are dealing with the imaginative record of a notable man and his fortunes (24), a record into which old folk tales—that of the fatal child (28), and that of the riddle to be guessed by the hero (29)—have en-

tered. But the story of the incestuous marriage, he ventures to think (29), may be a historical fact, while the self-inflicted blinding appears to him the device of some story-teller, invented to satisfy the demand for just punishment. For 'to look upon the sun', he says, is in Greek a periphrasis for 'to live', so that leaving the light of the sun would be the equivalent of dying. I regret to say that (on pages 30-34), where Dr. Rose takes issue with Frazer's treatment of Ovid's *Fasti*⁵, he still follows through thick and thin Wissowa⁶, and his English partizan Fowler⁷, in treating all Italic myths as Greek importations. I have expressed my contrary conviction elsewhere⁸ and I am glad to find myself in accord with Friedrich Pfister⁹.

The third lecture has really little to do with the topic of the title. It contains a discussion of the mythographer Hyginus, of whose work Professor Rose is preparing a new edition, critical and annotated, to which, I feel certain, we may look forward with justified great expectations. In treating this book of a late writer he proposes to apply the criteria of which we have spoken. He illustrates these by a somewhat detailed discussion of the Antigone story as told by Hyginus (40-42), and that of Theonoe (42). His conclusion is that Hyginus did not go back directly to the Greek dramatists, but that he used some intermediary of the later Alexandrian time, a man who resembled somewhat Parthenios, the friend of Cornelius Gallus.

The three lectures serve well to introduce any reader who has become acquainted with Professor Rose's *Handbook of Greek Mythology* to the principles on which that book, so greatly different from the ordinary treatment of the subject, was built. To the scholar who has himself worked in the field the pamphlet offers nothing new, except the prospect of the edition of Hyginus. In fact, the author's statements, particularly as to heroes and to Italic stories, are controversial and should decidedly be compared with, and corrected by, the extremely valuable discussion of Friedrich Pfister in his latest book⁹.

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⁴James George Frazer, *Publii Ovidii Nasonis Fastorum Libri Sex*, 5 volumes (New York, Macmillan, 1929).

⁵Georg Wissowa, *Religion und Kultus der Römer* (Munich, C. H. Beck, 1912).

⁶W. Warde Fowler, *The Religious Experience of the Roman People* (New York, Macmillan, 1911).

⁷THE CLASSICAL WEEKLY 23.27.

⁸Die Religion der Griechen und Römer (Leipzig, O. R. Reisland, 1930).

⁹Karl Robert, *Oedipus I, II* (Berlin, Weidmann, 1915).



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